

Telephonic press conference on the topic of the Obama Administration's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)'s Washington Fellowship Program.

Grant Harris, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs on the National Security Staff of the White House and Shannon Green, Acting Senior Director for Global Engagement at the National Security Council

**Via teleconference
African Regional Media Hub
January 9 2014**

Moderator: Hello to everyone to the US Department of State's Africa Regional Media Hub. I would like to welcome our individual callers who have dialled in from across the continent and those who are gathered at our various embassies and consulates. Today we are joined by Grant Harris, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs on the National Security Staff of the White House and Shannon Green, Acting Senior Director for Global Engagement at the National Security Council. They are both speaking to us from Washington DC. We will begin with remarks from Grant Harris. That will be followed by remarks from Shannon Green and we will then open it up to your questions. To ask a question, please press 'star one' on your phone to join the question queue. You may join the queue at any time. Today's call is on the record and will last approximately 45 minutes. And with that, I'll turn it over to Grant Harris.

Grant Harris: Thank you and good afternoon everyone. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us and to join us today. We're excited to be speaking with you about the President's Young African Leaders Initiative, as we call it, YALI, and as a piece of that the signature component of it, the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. The Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders was launched during President Obama's recent trip to Africa. In South Africa he hosted a town hall with approximately 600 young leaders of various backgrounds in which he described this new program which we'll be talking about more today.

I wanted to talk first just briefly, about the general initiative of YALI before we get into more of the specifics of the Washington Fellowship itself. The Young African Leaders Initiative is inspired by President Obama's firm belief that we've got to be engaged with and we want to do everything we can to support Africa's next generation of leaders.

The president believes that each young leader can have a transformational impact on his or her community. And through this we've started an initiative in the form of YALI that seeks to do three things. It seeks to support leadership skills and development; it seeks to support young entrepreneurs and it also seeks to assist in networking and creating networks of young African leaders across the region in various backgrounds and across different communities. Those are the three lines of effort of this broad Young African Leaders Initiative that involves many different activities. It involves more than 2,000 activities in Africa so far. It includes various leadership councils that our ambassadors and our consul generals have formed to keep regularly engaged with young leaders in

different countries. And it includes a lot of different programming in the United States in which we try to make sure that we're connected to directly hearing from youth, benefiting from the views of and doing everything that we can to support young leaders so that they can propel economic growth and support and strengthen democratic institutions in their home countries.

As I mentioned, a key component of this Young African Leaders Initiative is what we call the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. This is a program that's going to be starting in June 2014. It will bring 500 young African leaders from across the region to the United States to participate in various activities here which my colleague Shannon is going to be speaking about in more detail. But the basic idea is that by participating in this program we can increase our interaction with these promising young leaders. We can through our universities and colleges in the United States help provide additional concrete skills in civic leadership, in public management in business and entrepreneurship. We can help to support internships for 100 of those 500 here while in the United States. All of those young African leaders in this Washington Fellowship Program will be able to participate in a summit here in Washington DC which is going to include a meeting with President Obama. And then upon their return to their respective African countries we'll continue to provide US resources to support them in each of their activities so that we're staying connected in the years to come and we'll continue to support them and provide opportunities to put these new skills to work in propelling economic growth and development and strengthening democratic institutions.

This entire idea of engaging young African leaders is a cornerstone of US policy toward Africa. And in the US strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa, which we recently released and which is available on the White House website, President Obama makes it incredibly clear that in everything that the United States does in seeking to support economic growth, in seeking to support strong democratic institutions, in seeking to support development gains and to advance peace and security; that in all of these areas of work we've got to do it by engaging young leaders and that's a critical element of everything that we want to be doing day to day. With that I want to pass it to my colleague Shannon Green who will be able to talk in greater detail about the Washington Fellowship.

Shannon Green: Thanks Grant and I just want to echo that we're very pleased to be on this call this morning. We're at a very exciting time with the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, hence the broader YALI Initiative. As Grant mentioned we have entered into a new phase with this effort by launching the application for Young African Leaders on the State.gov website just about a month ago and already there has been tremendous interest in this program really, and an unprecedented response. In about a month of the application process being open over 40,000 candidates from Africa have already started applications and nearly 7,000 have completed their applications. So there is vast interest and we very much want to make sure that we're tapping into the most talented cohort of young African leaders for the Fellowship, but we also have mechanisms to follow up the Young African Leaders that are interested in this program and for whatever reason aren't able to participate this first year.

The online application is due in just about two weeks on January 27. The candidates that have the strongest applications will be interviewed by our embassies in Africa in February. Final decisions will be made on participants in early April of 2014. In terms of the requirements for application we're looking for applicants between the ages of 25 and 35 although applicants younger than 25 will be considered if they're exceptional candidates and meet all the other requirements. They must be proficient in English, because as Grant mentioned the Washington Fellows will be placed immediately into our top universities and colleges here in the US, and those fellowship interviews at universities will be taking place in English. In addition they'll have the chance to interact at very high levels with leading figures from private sector, civil society and government which will also be happening in English. They must not hold US citizenship or residency. They must have demonstrated leadership skills already so we're looking for a really high echelon of leaders who have already started to make a difference in their communities and their organizations and their institution. And then they must be committed to returning to Africa after the program in the US has concluded because one of the main tenants of this program is it's not just an individual investment in these 500 leaders, it's also about those 500 leaders giving back and sort of building up a circle of young African leaders that benefit from this program.

We are working very hard to get the word out about this historic opportunity including doing a call like this today. Our embassies have been very actively promoting this opportunity since the president did the town hall in South Africa as Grant mentioned. And we're really excited that just this week the technology lead for YALI Macon Phillips who was also Obama's tech guru here at the White House is travelling in Africa and is engaging directly with young leaders in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Benin.

Really quickly I just wanted to give you guys the three tracks from which applicants will be drawn. There are three different areas as Grant mentioned where we're really trying to double down on our efforts and those are business and entrepreneurship and that track and those institutes and those universities will cater for Fellows who want to be leaders in the private sector, or those who already have their own business or want to start their own business ventures in Africa.

The second is civic leadership and that track is focused on Fellows who are civically engaged and serving the public through non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations or as volunteers. And then the third is public management and that track will be tailored to Fellows who work or aspire to work in all walks of government and regional or international organizations or other publicly-minded groups or think tanks. So generally those three tracks are the way that the institute in the US will be organised and their training will be tailored to those tracks in building concrete skills as Grant mentioned. And in each of those areas we're lining up a set of opportunities in each of those tracks for the Fellows to take advantage of. So with that, we'd like to open it up for your questions and comments.

Moderator: Okay, thank you very much. So as Shannon Green said we will now begin the question and answer portion of today's call. For those who are asking questions we ask that you first state your name and affiliation and please limit yourself to one question only as we know there are a lot of questions out there today. Our first question will go to the US Embassy in Accra, Ghana.

Question: Hello. My name is Edmund Smith-Asante. I write for the Daily Graphic. I just want to know whether we've had any applications coming from Ghana yet and how many people have applied. Thank you.

Shannon Green: We've had a tremendous number of applications coming from Ghana and we'll have to check the figures but when we were originally looking at it I know that it was a very significant number. And just something that we didn't touch on, we haven't set targets for each country. We're really hoping that will get applicants from every country in Africa but of course, there are some countries where the volume has been higher and I think Ghana was one of them.

Moderator: Thank you. Our next question goes to Lagos, Nigeria.

Question: My name is Victor Asije. I work for the News Agency of Nigeria. Looking at the largeness of Africa, the continent and the final thread leaders you are looking at. With this, how do you hope to distribute this among African countries?

Grant Harris: Your question was, how do we hope to distribute them?

Question: Yes, looking at the final thread across Africa. I want to know the number per country. How many people are you expecting from Nigeria?

Grant Harris: Sure. As my colleague just was explaining, we're hoping for a very broad and diverse group of Africans. Many will be interviewed. 500 will be selected for this program. They'll be from across sub-Saharan Africa. There is no set or specific number we're looking for from any individual country. It's a competitive process and we are hoping that many will apply as many already have, approximately 40 000. People have started applications and we're hoping that number will grow and of those it will be a competitive process to select them.

Shannon Green: Can I add on this further? Each post is going to be doing the interviews as I mentioned and forward to our panel in Washington the top candidates. That panel then has to figure out of all the candidates submitted from all the countries in Africa what is the best mix in the top 500 in that whole group and part of that is making sure that there's diversity in terms of their backgrounds that they're coming from, that there's gender diversity, that there's diversity in terms of the tracks that they're interested in. So there is quite a bit of matching that has to go on back here to get to that 500 number. There's no specific target for each country. We're just looking for broad, diverse group of 500 top leaders.

Moderator: A reminder to all of our callers who would like to ask a question, please press 'star one' on your telephone to enter the question queue. Our next question is from Luanda, Angola.

Question: My name is Daniel Quiquexe from Angola National Radio. My question is exactly I'd like to know, do you have any policy for each African country to participate in these Washington Fellowships?

Grant Harris: The Young African Leaders Initiative spans all of sub-Saharan Africa and we want to be engaged in every country, connecting with young leaders in every country, supporting young leaders in every country. This particular program, the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is open to individuals across sub-Saharan Africa. There is no quota or specific number or target for any particular country. We're looking for a broad group of applicants. We're looking for a diverse group of applicants and from those it will be a competitive process to select who will participate. But there's no individual target or goal for Angola or Nigeria or Ghana or any other country. Young leaders from across the region will apply and that's how the process will work.

Moderator: Thank you. We have a question now from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Question: I'm Philemon Longonia, Groupe L'Avenir, TV of Democratic Republic of Congo. I have two questions - what Africa and the USA can expect in the future in this initiative of President Obama and second question, what are the conditions that will decide for this scholarship? Thank you.

Grant Harris: I'm not sure that I heard the first question just given the phone connection that I have. I heard the second one about the criteria for qualifying. If others understood the first that's fine. If not, I'd ask that gentleman to please repeat it.

Question: Okay. What Africa and the USA can expect in the future in this initiative of President Obama? What Africa and the USA can expect.

Grant Harris: I see. Why don't I take that first question and Shannon maybe you'll speak to the second in terms of the criteria. The first question I understood sir, is what is the future of the relationship between the United States and Africa as it relates to this initiative, the Young African Leaders Initiative and where do we hope to go, and the answer is very simple. We see engaging young African leaders as critical to everything that we want to achieve with African partners. Engaging young leaders is absolutely essential to strengthening democratic institutions, to supporting economic growth and prosperity and to advancing peace and security. Engaging young leaders is at the heart of US policy toward Africa and engaging young leaders is a personal commitment of President Obama. So we see the Young African Leaders Initiative as an important way to be connected to and to support young leaders of every background in every country. And through that we want to grow this program.

We want to make sure that it's as strong as possible, that it's informed by what young leaders are looking to achieve and until now, what we've heard time and again from young leaders across the region, is that there's a yearning for support in developing specific skills, that there is a desire to network and to meet other young African leaders across the region so that people know what others are doing, so that they can be connected, so that they can build their businesses and their non-profits and their work by connecting with others who are doing similar work. And also that there's a large group of young entrepreneurs who are looking to create and to build jobs and we want to support them. Those are the three big areas that we've heard over and over as a great need and it's an area where we want to make sure that the United States is supporting and working with young leaders to achieve these goals. So that's the vision of the Young African Leaders Initiative. It is to support young leaders in building leadership skills, supporting young entrepreneurs and networking young African leaders to each other and to Americans. My colleague Shannon can speak more specifically to the criteria for this particular element of the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders.

Shannon Green: Alright, so why don't I expand a little on eligibility and the criteria which are slightly different. We spoke a little bit about eligibility; in order to apply these leaders must be citizens of and residents in a sub-Saharan African country. In other words, persons holding US citizenship or residency here in the US are not eligible. We are looking for young leaders who have spoken and written proficiency in English as I mentioned because they will have to be able to operate in English from the get-go. We're looking for young leaders between the ages of 25 and 35 at the time of the application, otherwise I mentioned, really exceptional young leaders below the age of 25 will be considered.

Now in terms of what we are actually looking for, we are looking for Fellows who have a proven record of leadership and accomplishment in public service, business and entrepreneurship or civic engagements. And as I mentioned, we're really aiming for a cadre of Fellows who have already started to establish themselves in each of these fields and who are already showing that they can have a transformational impact within their organizations or their institutions.

We are looking for Fellows who have a demonstrated commitment to public or community service, volunteerism or mentorship, as I mentioned because a major component of this program is that they will give back when they return home. We are looking for Fellows who have the ability to work co-operatively in diverse groups and respect the opinions of others. As Grant mentioned, a major component of this program is networking. Still we will be looking for people who have demonstrated that ability to work within such diverse groups. We're looking for Fellows with strong social and communication skills. We are looking for Fellows that have demonstrated strong academic performance with preference given to applicants with some university education although again, that's not a requirement. We are looking for Fellows who are going to bring an energetic and positive attitude. We've had such great success with

previous gala events where we were really tapping into a group of Fellows who had such great positive energy and really went home and made a difference in their communities, so we're looking to replicate that. And finally we're looking for Fellows who have a commitment to return to Africa and apply the skills and training that they have gained through the program to benefit their countries and communities or their schools.

Moderator: Thank you. Our next question goes to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Questions: My name is [unclear] former student of [unclear] University of Agriculture. My question is grounded on the American commission of African countries as important players for the partners in global development. Now, Young Leader Initiative aiming at training these young leaders who will come back to Africa and turn the resources of this continent into better living standards for the people that are in this continent. Now I would like to know, as far as the regional bloc of this continent is a very key player of this continent, which, if neglected will leave the living status of the people in shambles. Now these young leaders are being trained from America, will they be connected to regional blocs that in the end and afterwards will be taken as important people, will be taken as respected people, will be taken as the people who in the near future will take their positions in various governments in these countries to transform the living of all the people. Thank you.

Grant Harris: Again, I apologize for my phone connection, it makes it sometimes difficult to catch everything, but what I heard you asking was about the role of the regional blocs, the economic blocs in terms of their importance and how they would relate to the program. Is that right? Okay, great, I'm happy to address that and I think the best way to do it is to talk a little bit more about how we see this program working when the Young African Leaders have returned to their respective countries in Africa.

So Shannon and I have talked about 500 young leaders who will come to the United States. There are three tracks - business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership and public management. They're going to be at US universities for six weeks learning about these different tracks. Some will participate in internships in the United States. All will participate in a summit here in Washington DC that will include President Obama. But now, and here's the key point getting to your question Sir, these young leaders will return to their various countries and we will stay connected with them to continue to support opportunities in each of these fields. For instance, if a young leader participates in the business and entrepreneurship track, upon returning to his or her country, we are hoping to work with multi-national and national companies that can provide internships and additional management training and additional opportunities. We already have some very large US and African companies that have made commitments to provide specific internships and training for these young African leaders. So this will be ongoing work to support them. If somebody participated in the civic leadership track we will stay connected with them as well. We will be partnering with non-profit organizations, with non-governmental organizations, similarly to provide opportunities and internships and training. We also are making available additional US money for which young leaders can compete for seed money for ideas to start businesses, to grow their non-profits, so

that's another way we will be supporting them when they return to their countries. And for those who are interested in public management we want to work with governments to create opportunities in public service, in ministries across the government that will provide opportunities for these young leaders to get involved directly in strengthening the democratic institutions that we see as critical, so in each of these different tracks there will be opportunities in Africa for ongoing leadership skills training, for internships, for placements. Not every Washington Fellow who participates will necessarily have an internship or a specific placement like that upon returning to Africa but we want to provide as many Washington Fellows as possible with these types of internships by partnering a broad range of governments, of economic organizations, of businesses.

So your question about regional blocs is a great question because regional institutions can participate in this by providing training or internships or opportunities just as governments can. It's something that we'd love to talk more about as the program grows and as we look for additional placements and support for these young Fellows. The idea is to make sure that after gaining additional skills in the United States these young leaders in returning to their communities in Africa are putting those skills to use, that they have additional opportunities and internships and training and placements, so that they are able to grow their businesses, that they're able to get involved in and work for government and be public servants and they're involved in and continuing to be civic leaders in growing and putting into effect their ideas and their organizations for their communities.

Moderator: Thank you. Our next question goes to Nairobi, Kenya.

Question: I'm Jeremiah Kiplagat. I'm a reporter with the Daily Nation. My question is almost similar to the one from Dar es Salaam but I would like to know if you have a program where you would follow up on those who will gain the various skills from Washington. Do you have a program where you will maybe keep in touch with the people you would have trained?

Shannon Green: Yes, absolutely, that is the idea of this, that we're building a network not just for today but for far into the future, so one of the things that we're looking at is developing a technology platform through which we can stay in touch not only with the 500 Washington Fellows who come through the program in this first year but the thousands or tens of thousands of young leaders who expressed interest in the program and have expressed interest in gaining leadership skills. So what we're doing is building an online portal where the Fellows will have access to resources such as training modules online, best practices in terms of leadership in different areas and for the Fellows themselves, there will be a part of that portal whereby they can see the types of opportunities that Grant was talking about. So they can see when a company in Africa is looking for an intern to draw from the Washington Fellows. They'll see when the US Africa Development Foundation has grant opportunities where they can apply to get funding for a venture that they have conceived of. So that's one of the ways that we're going to stay in touch. In addition, once the Fellows return to Africa as Grant mentioned, there will be networking events that include US government officials, that include the

private sector, that include civil society, that include existing leadership networks that are already active on the continent and those networking events will happen at a country level, at a regional level and at a continent-wide level. So our intention is very much that we're building a network that we're going to continue to engage in and continue to invest in, that's just going to get larger and more robust over time. And the idea here is that the Fellows in particular who participated in this program will really be able to cross-pollinate across countries, across sectors, across backgrounds through online networking and also the important networking events.

Grant Harris: I just have one point which is so critical about the cross-pollination of efforts. As we mentioned at the beginning, over 2 000 events have taken place in Africa as part of the broader Young African Leaders Initiative and that's included a lot of events sponsored by our embassies and our consulates and we've also had major events in the United States like President Obama hosting a Town Hall in 2010. Now we've seen through those events young leaders connect with one another in different fields and take their work and their organizations and their businesses to the next level as they've made these connections with other young leaders, particularly in other countries. We've seen people meet at these events and form co-operatives as in looking to bring goods to market in different countries at greater prices. We've seen people meet and then form non-profit organizations that advocate for youth rights. We've seen them do a variety of things but it underscores the importance of networking and meeting other young leaders across the continent.

Moderator: Thank you. We currently have five questions in our question queue. I'll call on the next questioner soon, but I want to remind everyone that if you would like to ask a question to please press 'star one'. We have questioners in the queue from Accra, , Lagos, Kinshasa, Nairobi and the last questioner who I will call on now is Binta Sagna of Senegal. For others who are trying to submit questions and who are not in the queue you may also send a message to afmediahub@state.gov to let us know that you're trying to submit a question. Thank you and let's go to Binta Sagna please.

Question: Thank you very much. I would like first of all to say that YALI is an amazing program. Thank you very much for this very nice initiative. My question is YALI is only targeting leaders in Africa. What about all those African leaders living abroad or young leaders who really want change for Africa. Are you planning another program in that sense?

Grant Harris: Again, I think my phone connection isn't as good as I would like. Shannon did you catch that or can you ask the speaker to repeat the question?

Shannon Green: I believe you're asking about leaders outside of Africa who want to contribute to Africa or who may be in an older age range. Is that correct?

Question: Exactly. I'm French originally from Senegal and we are young leaders living abroad and we would like to be part of this initiative as well.

Shannon Green: We aren't conceiving currently a specific program in the way that you have described but President Obama is absolutely committed to developing the next generation of leaders worldwide, both within the US but also in other regions and so we just recently announced the South East Asian Leaders Initiative which the president announced to 150 young leaders who were gathered in Manila. So that's the next phase of our Young Leaders Initiative and we do have plans to expand it to other regions, again because he is incredibly invested in this idea of developing the next generation of leaders, but we don't have a specific program in mind to support leaders outside of Africa who want to contribute to Africa.

Moderator: Thank you. Our next question goes to Accra, Ghana.

Question: I am [unclear], a reporter with [unclear] newspaper. You did mention that you received so far 40,000 applications. I want to find out what are their chances of re-application for those who did not make it to the top 500 fellows. Do they have chances of re-applying?

Shannon Green: So the 40,000 number that I quoted was the number of applications that have been started. Thus far 7,000 have been completed and it's absolutely possible for people to re-apply in future years. In fact we hope and expect that people who aren't able to participate this first year will re-apply. Our intention is that this is not just a one-off effort this year but that it continues and actually grows in future years. So that's our commitment and we would very much encourage people who are not selected this year to re-apply and as I mentioned, we are also putting some thought into how to stay engaged with the large number of applicants who weren't selected and one way, as I mentioned, will be virtually through this platform that we're developing. We are also looking at things that we can do on the continent to stay engaged with the broader set of applicants who are interested in this fellowship and just weren't selected in this first year.

Moderator: Our next question goes to Lagos, Nigeria.

Question: I am Kehinde Adeaga, business editor at Rainbow FM. My question is, I would like to know what are the benefits of this initiative to participating countries and the participants themselves and also I would like to know what is the cost implication and then what impact will this be, I mean the progress on Africa.

Shannon Green: Okay, I think I got most of that. If I didn't we can redirect a little bit. I think as Grant mentioned, there is a history of engagement for YALI starting in 2010. What we've seen, and what we think we're going to see on a much bigger scale because of the Washington Fellowship, is that these leaders have gone home, have started new non-profits, they've started new businesses, they've been working within their ministries to really introduce transformative reforms, so our thinking is very much that we're equipping them with concrete skills and with a support infrastructure in which a network of other leaders both within the US and on the continent will allow them to really have a transformational impact in each of those sectors.

For example, we would imagine when Washington Fellows go home in the leadership track that they'll be able to introduce innovative ideas from their time in the US to really make their organizations more effective, more sustainable and more relevant, strengthening democratic norms in their countries and better serving the public. For the Fellows who participate in the public management track, again that they will take the ideas and the skills that they've gained through this program to drive reform and improvements within their ministries or organizations and introduce reforms, for example, that emphasise ethical leadership, transparency and good governance, customer service.

And then for the Fellows who participated in the business and entrepreneurship track, again that they're getting connected to entrepreneurs from the US and they're being inspired by leaders within Africa and that they have access to new opportunities for capital that when they go home they can add value to their businesses, or expand their enterprises or create new enterprises. So that's very much what we're thinking in terms of the goals. I think you mentioned something about cost implications. I'm not sure exactly what you mean. For the Fellows themselves, the entire experience is being paid for by the US Government and through partnerships with universities and the private sector. So the Fellows who participate themselves, there's no expectation that they would be shouldering any of the cost implications. I hope that answers your questions.

Moderator: Thank you. We have time for one last question. This question goes to Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Question: I'm Huguette Yeta. I work for Numerica Television in the DRC. I have heard about this program YALI. Here in the DRC it's difficult to find young leaders between 25 and 35 years old who fulfil or meet the YALI criteria. Why don't you go up to age 40 for example and I would like to know why the alumni from the American State Department cannot apply for this program.

Shannon Green: On the first part of your question we already had nearly 600 applicants from DRC who meet the requirements so it does appear that there are a significant number of people who are both interested and are able to apply for the fellowship. On the second piece, it's not that alumni of previous State Department programs are unable to apply but rather that we are seeking to expand the types and the number of people who are able to benefit from this experience. So in other words, we are doing a great amount of work, really trying to reach beyond the kinds of people and the sectors from which we draw from other programs, so alumni of previous programs are not prohibited in any way from applying, but we really are emphasising getting new leaders into the system who haven't had a chance to benefit from various programs before.

Moderator: If you all don't mind we did have one additional question come in from Maseru, Lesotho and we haven't had a chance to call on them yet so if you are okay with it, we'd like to really make this final question.

Question: Thank you very much. I just wanted to find out if the Fellowship is just going to be centered around Washington or the applicants will be spread across the US

Shannon Green: So the US universities and colleges that are sponsoring and hosting the Fellows for that first six-week period of leadership institute are throughout the country - literally every region of our country is represented. So for the first six weeks the Fellows will be in states throughout the US and then they'll come together in Washington DC for the summit. I don't know if we mentioned this, but 100 of the 500 Fellows will have the opportunity to stay in the US for an additional 8 weeks for an internship, or what we like to call a professional development experience, and there too they will be able to go throughout the country because the organizations that will be hosting these Fellows from the private sector, from civil society, think tanks, etc. will be sprinkled throughout the country.

Grant Harris: I think just as we close we want to reiterate, and I will say this on behalf of Shannon and myself, thank you very much for joining us and for taking the time to learn about this program which we are very excited about. The key point about everything that we have been saying is that President Obama is personally committed to supporting young African leaders and this Young African Leaders Initiative is a cornerstone of our Africa policy and of the United States commitment to partnering with African countries and young leaders to achieve joint objectives and to support economic growth and strengthen democratic institutions and advance all of our shared goals. So we appreciate you taking the time to speak with us. Thank you.

Monitor: That concludes today's call. I want to thank both of our speakers for joining us and thank all of our callers for participating. If you have any questions about today's call, please contact the Africa Regional Media Hub at afmediahub@state.gov. Thank you.

45 Minutes 38 Seconds